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PRESS RELEASE

ARSONIST SENTENCED TO SEVEN YEARS IN PRISON

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On Thursday, May 7, Joshua Charlton, 21, of Fall River Mills, was sentenced to seven years in state prison after pleading guilty to three counts of arson and one count of attempted child endangerment. These charges spanned a period of time from June of 2008 to February of 2009.

Mr. Charlton set several vegetation fires on the grounds of Mayers Memorial Hospital in Fall River Mills. One of the fires was also set in the basement of a building used as office and storage space at the hospital. All fires were extinguished before causing significant damage. These fires were set during a state of emergency declared by the governor as a result of numerous wildland fires burning in Shasta County during June of 2008.

Charlton also admitted starting a fire in a basket of clothing near a small child in a residence in Fall River Mills in February of 2009. That fire was also extinguished before causing damage to the structure or injuring anyone.

When contacted by Cal-Fire investigators Charlton admitted to starting all of the fires.

Charlton will be required to register as an arson offender upon his release from state prison. Two of the three arson convictions also qualify as "strikes" under California's Three Strikes Law.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Benjamin Hanna prosecuted the case. The investigation was conducted by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal-Fire) Investigators Mike Birondo and Don Gordon.